

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03
NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00
INRE-00 MCT-01 ACDA-12 COME-00 USSS-00 HA-05
EB-08 LAB-04 SIL-01 /081 W
-----031766 171909Z /50

O R 171735Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1398
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMCONSUL FLORENCE
DIA
AMCONSUL GENOA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL NAPLES
AMCONSUL PALERMO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
SHAPEUSNR
AMEMBASSY VIENNA
USCINCEUR VIAHINGEN GERMANY
USDOCOSOUTH
USMISSION USNATO
HQ AFOSI WASHDC//IVOAD
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE//ECJ2-R
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES

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US DOCOSOUTH FOR INTAF

SHAPEUSNR FOR POLAND

E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: PINT, IT, PFOR
SUBJECT: MORO KIDNAPPING
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REF: ROME 4892, ROME 4900

1. THE MORO KIDNAPPING YESTERDAY CAPTURED ITALY'S
ATTENTION AS NO OTHER EVENT HAS DONE IN MANY YEARS.
IT WAS AT THE CENTER OF THE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE
TO CONVIRM ANDROTTI'S NEW GOVERNMENT.IT WAS THE

OCCASION FOR DEMONSTRATIONS ALL OVER ITALY (FACILITATED BY A GENERAL STRIKE), IN WHICH REPORTEDLY 15 MILLION ITALIANS PARTICIPATED. MORO'S KIDNAPPING WAS GENERALLY INTERPRETED AS AN ATTACK ON THE STATE. ALL WERE AGREED THAT THE STATE MUST DEFEND ITSELF IN A MANNER CONSISTENT WITH DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS AND IT MUST REFUSE TO BE BLACKMAILED BY SUCH ACTIONS. THE UNANIMITY WITH WHICH ITALIANS CONDEMNED THE KIDNAPPING WAS PERHAPS THE MOST IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENT OF THE DAY. ONLY A FEW LEFTIST EXTREMISTS DARED SPEAK APPROVINGLY OF THIS TERRORIST ACT.

2. WITH REGARD TO THE KIDNAPPING ITSELF, THERE HAVE BEEN NO SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS SINCE REFTELS WERE SENT. APART FROM THE EVENTS AT THE SCENE OF THE KIDNAPPING, THERE IS LITTLE OR NO HARD INFORMATION AVAILABLE. IT IS NOT FULLY CONFIRMED YET THAT TI WAS IN FACT THE WORK OF THE RED BRIGADES. HOWEVER, THE METHODOLOGY OF THIS EVENT WAS SIMILAR TO OTHER ACTIONS BY THAT GROUP AND MOST KNOWLEDGEABLE ITALIAN OFFICIALS ASSUME THAT IT IS THEIR WORK. IF THIS KIDNAPPING FOLLOWS THE PATTERN OF OTHER POLITICALLY-INSPIRED ONES, IT IS LIKELY TO BE A LONG, DRAWN OUT AFFAIR WITH LITTLE HARD NEWS AND ENLESS RUMOR. SENIOR CONTACTS IN THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR REVEAL THAT THEY ARE IN FACT IN THE DARK ON ALL THE BASICALLY IMPORTANT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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QUESTIONS: WHO DID IT, WHERE MORO IS BEING HELD, WHAT THE KIDNAPPERS' DEMANDS WILL BE, ETC.,

3. PRIME MINISTER ANDREOTTI IS MEETING MARCH 17 WITH THE LEADERS OF THE FIVE PARTIES THAT SUPPORT HIS GOVERNMENT. THE MORO KIDNAPPING WILL DOUBTLESS BE THE CENTERPIECE OF THAT MEETING. THEY WILL REPORTEDLY DISCUSS/VARIOUS PROPOSALS TO DECLARE A "STATE OF EMERGENCY" ("STATO DI PERICOLO") WHICH UNDER ITALIAN LAW GIVES THE MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR AND THE PREFECTS EXCEPTIONAL POWERS IN THE FIELD OF PUBLIC ORDER. THE PRESS REPORTS THAT THE HEADS OF THE ARMED SERVICES AND A NUMBER OF SENIOR OFFICIALS OF THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR HAVE URGED THE DECLARATION OF A "STATE OF EMERGENCY" BUT THAT SENIOR POLITICAL LEADERS APPEAR RELUCTANT TO DO SO. DURING THE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE ON MARCH 16 SEVERAL SPEAKERS CALLED FOR NEW AND EXCEPTIONAL LAWS ON PUBLIC ORDER BUT ANDREOTTI, IN HIS FINAL SUMMING UP, DENIED THAT NEW LAWS WERE NEEDED OR DESIRABLE.

4. COMMENT: IT IS PERHAPS SIGNIFICANT THAT YESTERDAY

THE LEFT DID NOT WITHDRAW ITS PREVIOUSLY NEGOTIATED AGREEMENT TO SUPPORT THE NEW ANDROTTI GOVERNMENT AND DEMAND, IN LIGHT OF THE MORO KIDNAPPING, THE IMMEDIATE FORMATION OF AN "EMERGENCY GOVERNMENT" (I.E., INCLUDING THE COMMUNISTS IN MINISTERIAL POSITIONS). SUCH A DEMAND IS LIKELY IF THE GOVERNMENT APPEARS INEPT, INEFFICIENT, OR WEAK IN DEALING WITH THE MORO KIDNAPPING. IT IS TOO EARLY TO TELL WHETHER THE PUBLIC'S REACTION WILL WORK FOR OR AGAINST THE LEFT, BUT THE PCI IS ATTEMPTING (WHETHER CONSCIOUSLY OR NOT) TO AVOID A NEGATIVE REACTION BY BEING AMONG THE MOST VOCIFEROUS IN EXPRESSING THEIR OUTRAGE AND INDIGNATION.

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Message Attributes

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